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SIPDIS
TELEGRAM

March 30, 2004

To: No Action Addressee
Action: Unknown
From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 906 - UNKNOWN)
TAGS: PREL, PGOV, ETRD
Captions: None
Subject: A/S BURNS' MARCH 21 MEETING WITH ABU DHABI CROWN PRINCE KHALIFA BIN ZAYED
Ref: None

S E C R E T ABU DHABI 00906

SIPDIS
CXABU:
ACTION: POL
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DISSEMINATION: POL
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AMB:MMWAHBA
DRAFTED: POL:JFMAYBURY
Cleared: A/DCM:HOLSIN-WINDECKER

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FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3750
INFO RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI 3897
RUEHXK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RHMFIISS/HQ COALITION PROVISIONAL AUTH BAGHDAD

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 000906

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/29/2014
TAGS: PREL PGOV ETRD KMPI IZ IR IS TC
SUBJECT: A/S BURNS' MARCH 21 MEETING WITH ABU DHABI
CROWN PRINCE KHALIFA BIN ZAYED

Classified by Ambassador Marcelle M. Wahba, reasons
1.5 (b) and (d)

¶1. (S) Summary: NEA Assistant Secretary William Burns met in Abu Dhabi on March 21 with Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Shaykh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Deputy Abu Dhabi Crown Prince and Armed Force Chief Shaykh Mohammed bin Zayed and Information and Culture Minister Shaykh Abdullah bin Zayed attended the meeting. Burns was accompanied by the Ambassador and Polchief (notetaker). On Iraq, Khalifa denounced terrorist attempts at destabilizing the country and

urged the U.S. to warn Iran not to interfere in Iraq's internal affairs. The CP said he hoped the U.S. would make every effort to help resolve the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. Khalifa agreed with Burns on the need for reform and that each country needed to define its own needs to suit its society and culture. Burns and Khalifa reviewed bilateral progress, the March 15 TIFA signing in Washington, and expressed satisfaction about the successful Strategic Partnership dialogue held earlier in the day (to be covered septel). Burns also granted interviews to Abu Dhabi TV and the Arabic language daily Al Ittihad. End Summary.

Iraq

¶ 12. (S) Burns thanked the UAE Government on behalf of POTUS for its generous reconstruction assistance in Iraq (\$215 million pledged in Madrid) and in Afghanistan (over \$150 million). He said the U.S. was committed to working with the UN to try to ensure Iraq's stability, but he acknowledged that it would not be easy. "There will be challenges, but we will do our part," he said. Burns said the U.S. was concerned about Iran's ability to destabilize Iraq. "We are watching very carefully, and taking it very seriously," Burns said, adding that Europeans and others should convey similar concerns.

¶ 13. (S) The Crown Prince said the UAE has a duty to provide assistance to Iraq and Afghanistan. He said some UAE funds allocated for Afghanistan projects have not yet been spent because of administrative delays in Afghanistan, and he hoped the projects would be soon identified and agreed upon by the two sides. In Iraq, he said, the UAE and its allies have helped restore water and electricity, and its armed forces have built six hospitals. He said terrorists are attempting to destabilize Iraq after the U.S.-led Coalition has freed Iraq from years of tyranny. He urged the U.S. to warn Iran not to interfere in Iraq's internal affairs. Khalifa said that the Iranians know that Iraq's stability is in Iran's best interest.

Palestinians and Israelis

¶ 14. (S) President Bush is very concerned about the situation between Palestinians and Israelis and remains fully committed to a two-state solution, Burns said. The two-state solution brings dignity to both sides, and that, in turn, contributes to regional stability. Burns provided a brief outline of the Israeli proposal for a withdrawal from Gaza and noted U.S. concern that the measures need to be consistent with the Roadmap and achieving a two-state solution. Burns thanked the UAE for its financial assistance to Finance Minister Salam Fayyad to help him better manage the PA's finances. Burns told Khalifa that he hoped his meeting with Mubarak in Cairo on March 22 would create momentum and move the process forward. Egypt, he added, has a role to play to rebuild the PA security apparatus.

¶ 15. (S) Khalifa said the UAE has a duty to provide assistance to the Palestinians. His initial reaction to the Israeli suggestion of a withdrawal from Gaza was that it would not solve the problem. He said he hoped the U.S. would use its prominent international role to "deploy every effort" to solve the dispute. Khalifa blamed terrorists for brainwashing Arab youth. The UAE believes that terrorism and extremism results when people feel their rights have been trampled. If the Palestinian problem is resolved, Khalifa said, most of the terrorism problem would come to an end.

Reform and modernization

¶ 16. (S) Burns clarified U.S. intentions with regard to reforms in the Middle East (aka the Greater Middle East concept), emphasizing that the U.S. had no intention of imposing change on anyone. Economic, social, and political change are very important and urgent issues for the region, but change has to come from within Arab societies. He said the U.S. wants to help countries that want reforms, for example, assisting the UAE in opening up its trade. He said that modernizing the educational system goes hand-in-hand with modernizing the economy. Burns said the U.S. also wants to help people participate more fully in their political systems. Burns said it was important that the region see the U.S. making progress on Iraq, the Palestinian-Israeli problem, the GWOT, and reforms. Khalifa said he was optimistic that that would be the case.

¶ 17. (S) Khalifa said it was unfortunate that some had exploited the "Greater Middle East" concept by accusing the U.S. of seeking to impose reforms. Each country can begin to evaluate its circumstances and priorities gradually, and added that the UAE welcomes any friend who wants to demonstrate how reform will benefit UAE society. He agreed with Burns about the need for educational reforms to train people for economic opportunities.

Progress on the bilateral front

¶ 18. (S) Burns and Khalifa noted the success of the second Strategic Partnership dialogue held earlier in the day in Abu Dhabi (reported septel). Burns, who led the U.S. delegation, told Khalifa that the Strategic Partnership demonstrated that the bilateral relationship is in good shape and he credited the UAEG for their accomplishments. The TIFA signing is an example of what the two sides can do to bolster trade. Burns said progress on export controls to stop the proliferation of WMD materials was in both countries' interest. He said the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) was another avenue to strengthen cooperation. The planned May 1-2 JMC and the new Gulf Air Warfare Center illustrate the growing military cooperation. "In every area -- commercial, WMD, Export Controls -- the pace of our cooperation is faster than it is in any other country in the region," he said.

¶ 19. (S) Khalifa stated that he was pleased with the strong ties and he welcomed further initiatives in all fields. He agreed about the importance of non-proliferation of WMD. "We hope to see WMD totally removed from the region," Khalifa said.

(U) This cable was cleared by A/S Burns.
WAHBA